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The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Ranking Member Cochran:

As the Committee develops the spending bills for the upcoming fiscal year, I request that you include in the appropriate bill a ten-year extension of the successful Federal support mechanism for telecommunications infrastructure in rural Alaska that is set to expire at the end of this year.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 (PL 108-447) codified a rate structure, based on an FCC market structure order, for switched wholesale interstate long distance services originating or terminating in Alaska. This rate structure was intended to ensure that rates for service in Alaska cover the actual cost of that service and that revenues collected be used to support and expand the network in Alaska. The need to support and expand the network in Alaska continues to be great; the rate structure provided for through Public Law 108-447 has proven effective toward ensuring adequate revenue is collected and then invested to enhance the network and improve service.

Absent Congressional action to extend the current federal support mechanism, the rate structure will expire at the end of this year. I am concerned that without an extension, investment in Alaska telecommunications infrastructure will suffer and rural service will deteriorate. I therefore request that you include a ten-year extension of the current law in a suitable appropriations vehicle. This can be achieved by inserting the following bill language:

"Sec. _____. Section 112 of Division J of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 (PL 108-447) is amended by striking "2009" wherever it appears and inserting in lieu thereof "2019"."

Consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I certify that to the best of my knowledge neither I nor my immediate family has a pecuniary interest in this request. I further certify that I have posted a copy of this letter on my official website.

Thank you for your attention to matter and consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator